

# Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection & Resource Management

## Fact Sheet

### PRESERVING OUR LAND HERITAGE



#### Baltimore County's Land Preservation Program

Almost thirty years ago, Baltimore County government and leaders began a process to implement programs to protect our agricultural and natural resources and to help ensure the long term quality of life for the County's residents. With advanced planning and zoning practices, identification of growth centers in the 1970's, innovative environmental programs, and proactive land and resource protection efforts, Baltimore County has established a nationally recognized land preservation strategy. The benefits from this comprehensive approach are many: more compact and cost effective development, land resources preserved to support a viable agricultural community, retention of forest and habitat for wildlife, the preservation of our agricultural heritage, and the protection of water quality for our local streams and rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. Baltimore County, working with a number of interests groups and State agencies, has created a variety of options to promote the preservation of our land and natural resources.

#### Conservation Easements - What Are They?

A Conservation Easement is an agreement between the landowner, the County, the State or the Land Trust, which ensures the permanent protection of the significant agricultural, natural, and scenic resources of the land. Placing an easement on the land may qualify the landowner to receive income, estate, and property tax benefits, while maintaining ownership and privacy. Easements primarily preclude residential, commercial, or industrial development, and provide for the protection of the significant natural resources on the property.

#### How Can I Find Out More About Land Preservation?

A brief description of the many programs available is provided on the back of this sheet. If you are interested in any of these programs, please call the numbers provided.



County Courts Building  
401 Bosley Avenue, Room 416  
Towson, Maryland 21204  
410-887-4488 x241  
Fax: 410-887-4804  
Email: [deprm@co.ba.md.us](mailto:deprm@co.ba.md.us)  
Website: <http://www.co.ba.md.us/deprm>



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- **Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation**

Created in 1979, this program has been dedicated to preserving farmland and fostering commercial agriculture. With joint funding by the County and the State, over 17,000 acres of farmland have been preserved in Baltimore County. To qualify for this program, a farm must be a minimum of 50 acres or located adjacent to a preserved property. Applications to sell development rights may be made annually by July 1st following enrollment in an Agricultural District. Landowners receive cash payments for participating in the easement program.



- **Baltimore County Agricultural Land Preservation Program**

Created in 1994 to preserve working family farms, this Baltimore County program has used innovative and collaborative funding mechanisms for land preservation. Landowners have protected over 1,300 acres through this program. To participate, a farm must be 50 acres in size or located adjacent to a preserved property.

- **Maryland Environmental Trust and Local Land Trusts**

Created by the Maryland General Assembly in 1967 to protect Maryland's natural environment, the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) seeks donated easements on farms and forestlands, wildlife habitats, waterfront acreages, natural areas, historic sites, and other valuable and scenic features. In 1974, a landowner in Baltimore County was one of the first to protect their property through this program. Today, Baltimore County remains a leader in the State, with County landowners preserving over 12,000 acres through donations. Although both MET and Local Land Trusts prefer to accept donations on lands greater than 50 acres. Local Land Trusts are often willing to work with smaller property owners. Donations are accepted throughout the year. Landowners may qualify for a significant tax deduction and/or credit. MET also provides loans to qualified groups for the purchase of land for preservation.

- **Rural Legacy...Protecting Natural and Scenic Resources**

Created in 1997 by the Maryland General Assembly, this program seeks to set aside large blocks of rural lands for the protection of natural and scenic resources and the fostering of rural industries such as agriculture and forestry. With State and County funds, over 3,000 acres have been preserved in the five Rural Legacy Areas in the County. These areas include the Coastal Area, Piney Run, Long Green Valley, Gunpowder River Valley, and Manor. Landowners may apply at any time to these sponsors, and the sponsors apply annually for funding.

- **Green Print...Protecting Ecologically Important Lands**

Created in 2000 by the Maryland General Assembly, this program seeks to protect ecologically important lands in the State. This new program seeks to accomplish this by targeting purchase and easement dollars to landowners within "ecologically important hubs and corridors." The program is administered by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, however, landowners whose properties are adjacent to the drinking water reservoirs or other large blocks of forests should contact the County to determine if they are eligible.

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**For information on State or Local Land Trust Programs, please contact:**

Maryland Environmental Trust  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032  
Phone: 410-514-7900 Fax: 410-514-7919

Wally Lippincott  
Agricultural Preservation  
Baltimore County Department of Environmental  
Protection & Resource Management  
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